



**Kendrick Park Committee
Report to the Town Manager
May 2009**

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Introduction

This is the final report of the Kendrick Park Committee and is based on fifteen months of monthly committee meetings, subcommittee meetings, four public meetings (neighborhood, school age, business and an All-Town meeting) and special events including a survey party for teen input at Bertucci's restaurant, field studies in other urban parks, detailed analyses of the tree inventory and site topography, and collaborative events with students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, which featured designs for Kendrick Park. In addition to the public meetings, suggestions and input from the community was sought through three newspaper runs of survey forms designed by the Committee and sponsored by the Amherst Bulletin/Daily Hampshire Gazette. Email responses and general comments were also solicited via a Kendrick Park email address and direct mail.

Each subcommittee spent countless hours researching various aspects of creating a park, including park use, design, landscaping, maintenance, accessibility, passive and active recreation, materials, history and aesthetics. We have listened and thought carefully about the future of the park and recognize that we would need many Kendrick Parks to include all the hundreds of wonderful ideas expressed by the public. The following report reflects the Kendrick Park Committee's recommendations to the Town Manager as well as to the general public.

Vision Statement

Kendrick Park will be a unique urban green space – an integral and exciting part of a vital Downtown Amherst, creating a beautiful and vibrant destination where all will be welcome.

Design Goals for Kendrick Park

The park should:

- be an oasis – a beautiful place;
- adhere to the original intent of the Kendrick Family as described by their trustees (see Appendix #1);
- be an active, multi-use park;
- be physically and culturally accessible to all people;
- have a design and use character that is distinct from other parks in Downtown Amherst;
- honor Amherst's history; its concept should be forward-looking and progressive;
- be sustainable;
- be an attractive destination;
- provide opportunities for fostering a sense of community;
- be an inviting and visible gateway to the northern end of Downtown Amherst.

Public input and recommendations by the subcommittees:

- The design should retain the natural feel of the existing park land by selectively preserving existing trees in accordance with town procedure, and keeping a significant portion of the park as open green space.
- There should be places created for active and passive recreation.
- There should be opportunities for people of all ages to gather and recreate and learn.
- The park design and its use should serve to enhance, support, and revitalize the surrounding commercial area while respecting the nearby residential neighborhood.
- There should be a designated space for children and families – a play area that is safe. This should, to the extent possible, be a “natural playground”, as defined in the Appendix # 13.
- The park design should provide locations for performing arts of differing types and scales.
- There should be walking paths, including a walkway around the park’s perimeter.
- There should be places to sit. Park designers should consider different types of seating instead of generic benches.
- Safe pedestrian access should be created, including new marked street crossings.
- Any built elements, including structures and recreational areas, should be designed to be multi-use, as much as possible.
- The park design should use natural materials and forms as much as possible. Materials such as stone, wood and earth should be considered, as described in Appendix # 13, Natural Playgrounds, and as noted in Appendix # 12B, Natural and Landscape Subcommittee Report.
- Any built features, such as lighting and porous hard-scaping, should utilize the best sustainable technologies available.
- The use of old, on-site foundations to create park elements – walls, terraces, etc. – should be explored.
- The traditional uses of the park (e.g., Christmas tree sales and ice skating) should be allowed to continue. The town will need to design rules and regulations around park use. All users of the park will be expected to abide by these rules and regulations. The rules and regulations will be subject to review and approval of the Town Manager and an ongoing Kendrick Park Committee.
- An area of the park should be designed to support heavier foot traffic (for example, the Christmas tree sales), so that the integrity of the park grounds as a whole can be protected.
- Park land should not be used for public parking.
- A fee structure should be established for the use of the park for events, to supplement park maintenance.
- Local artists should be given preferential consideration for any art installation in the park.
- There should be an educational component to the park, such as the labeling of plant material and the presentation of historical information about the Kendrick family.

Built Structures

There has been interest expressed in the following additional features. However, built structures of any type are a sensitive issue for many. The Kendrick Park Committee notes that incorporating any of the following features into the park, while useful and desired by many, will represent both a political and design challenge:

- a multi-use structure that can accommodate a public market or farmers' market;
- a carousel;
- a performing arts structure;
- a skateboard plaza;
- sports courts.

Public Restrooms

The need for public restrooms has been a longstanding issue in downtown Amherst. Public restrooms involve many daunting issues of maintenance, cost, security, and liability. However, it should be understood that if no public restrooms are provided, a completed Kendrick Park that succeeds in attracting multiple users will serve them poorly. A lack of public restrooms will encourage unsanitary 'scofflaw' behavior, and will place an unfair burden on the restrooms of adjacent private establishments.

Future Steps

- The current Kendrick Park Committee should remain intact and continue into the design phase;
- The charge of the current Kendrick Park Committee should be extended into the design and development phase;
- A portion of the existing trust fund should be dedicated to an endowment for the purpose of enhancing and helping to sustain the park;
- A portion of the trust fund should be used for preliminary design purposes;
- A fund should be established to receive public contributions for park construction and maintenance;
- Grants should be sought to supplement the design, building and maintenance of the park.

APPENDICES

1 **Trustee Document and other legal papers**

- Fiduciary Deed, 10/05/06
- Trust u/w of Jenny Kendrick, a/k/a Jennie Kendrick, 6/16/50 and 4/14/64
- Article 37 – Petition, to see if the Town will vote to accept a gift from the Kendrick Trustees, 5/19/04

Note: There is no record of George Kendrick and Jenny Kendrick's intentions, beyond their trustees' description of the trust's purpose in a 1964 court petition: *"to convert the land so acquired into a landscaped park to be known as 'Kendrick Park', for the use and benefit of the general public, and to maintain said park for the enhancement and beautification of that area of Amherst, and to erect thereon a suitable marker commemorating its benefactors."*

2 **Kendrick Park – Land and Surroundings, 9/08**

3 **Kendrick Park – Historical and Family Context, 9/08**

4 **Kendrick Park – A Graphic History of the Site, 10/03**

5 **Kendrick Park Houses, with map entitled "The 'Island' in 1930"**

6 **Maps:**

- Property lines and Aerial Photo
- Zoning
- Topography
- Utilities
- Detail of utilities

7 **Tree inventory:**

- Maps (2)
- Chart with tree species and tree care recommendations

8 **Community Feedback Chart, Fall 2008**

Attachments A – Q

9 **Memorandum from DAAC (Disability Access Advisory Committee), 12/3/08**

10 **Memorandum from Agricultural Commission, 12/10/08**

11 **Newspaper articles and advertisements**

- 11A Historic articles
- 11B Current articles (2008-2009)
- 11C Public Survey Form

12 **Subcommittee Reports**

- 12A History and Aesthetics
- 12B Natural and Landscape
- 12C Recreation
- 12D Public Market

13 **Definition of "natural playgrounds"**

APPENDICES (continued)

14 List of Kendrick Park Committee Members

OTHER RESOURCES:

(Copies of documents are available for viewing in the Planning Department.)

“Kendrick Park: An Analysis and Proposal” by Patricia Bischoff, Masters Degree Thesis, 1974, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Plans for Kendrick Park, by Tony Cowles, student of Landscape Architecture, at the University of Massachusetts, Spring 2000

Plans for Kendrick Park, by Landscape Architecture students at the University of Massachusetts, Fall 2003

Site analysis and models by Landscape Architecture students at the University of Massachusetts, Fall 2008, taught by Frank Slegers, Assistant Professor, and Maggie Leonard, Lecturer

Written proposals for Kendrick Park by Architecture students at the University of Massachusetts, Fall 2008, taught by David Dillon, Lecturer

Website:

The Town of Amherst website is also an excellent source of information about Kendrick Park.

<http://www.amherstma.gov/index.asp?nid=923>